

Message Text

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 17033

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TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJECT: BAVARIAN AND HESSE ELECTION RESULTS: THE
NATIONAL IMPACT

REF: (A) MUNICH 1632, (B) FRANKFURT 7003

SUMMARY: WHILE THE SPD AND FDP SETBACKS IN HESSE AND
BAVARIA DO NOT, AS THE CDU/CSU CLAIM, REPRESENT A
DEFINITE VOTE AGAINST SCHMIDT, THEY ARE A CLEAR SIGNAL
THAT HE IS MOVING INTO DIFFICULT TIMES WITH THE ELECTO-
RATE. THE LARGE FDP LOSSES WILL TEND TO WEAKEN THE
PARTY'S LEVERAGE VIS-A-VIS THE SPD AND WILL ENCOURAGE
THOSE FDP ELEMENTS WHO FAVOR MORE "OPENNESS" TOWARD THE
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CDU. THE CDU/CSU IS GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY ITS RESOUND-

ING VICTORIES AND NOW SEES A REAL CHANCE OF OBTAINING A MAJORITY IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH LOCAL FACTORS PLAYED VERY IMPORTANT ROLES IN THE ELECTIONS IN HESSE AND BAVARIA ON OCTOBER 27, THE VOTERS WERE ALSO INFLUENCED BY NATIONAL CONCERNS, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC. THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND ON THE STRATEGIES PURSUED BY EACH OF THE THREE PARTIES BETWEEN NOW AND THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS. BOTH BAVARIA AND HESSE SHOWED ALMOST IDENTICAL TRENDS: A DRAMATIC INCREASE FOR THE CDU/CSU (7 PERCENT IN BOTH LAENDER) AND HEAVY LOSSES FOR THE SPD AND FDP COMBINATION (DOWN BY 8.1 PERCENT IN HESSE AND 8.5 PERCENT IN BAVARIA). FDP LOSSES WERE PARTICULARLY SERIOUS. THE PARTY JUST BARELY MANAGED TO SURMOUNT THE 5 PERCENT HURDLE IN BAVARIA WITH 5.2 PERCENT (5.5 PERCENT IN 1970). IT DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY IN HESSE, FROM 10.1 PERCENT TO 7.4 PERCENT.

2. THE RESULTS CAN HARDLY BE ENCOURAGING TO HELMUT SCHMIDT. OBVIOUSLY HIS REPLACEMENT OF BRANDT HAS NOT IN ITSELF BEEN SUFFICIENT TO REVERSE THE SPD SETBACK WHICH BEGAN LAST SPRING IN HAMBURG AND RHINELAND-PFALZ -- AND WHICH CONTINUED IN THE LOWER SAXONY ELECTIONS IN JUNE. ON THE OTHER HAND, NOBODY EXPECTED SCHMIDT TO WORK WONDERS IN A FEW MONTHS, AND THE LIKELIHOOD IS THAT SPD LOSSES AND CDU/CSU GAINS WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN GREATER IF BRANDT HAD REMAINED CHANCELLOR. MOREOVER, MANY OF THE REASONS FOR SPD LOSSES IN HESSE AND BAVARIA STEMMED FROM LOCAL ISSUES WITH WHICH SCHMIDT WAS NOT IDENTIFIED, OR FROM INTERNAL SPD PROBLEMS WHICH BEGAN BEFORE SCHMIDT BECAME CHANCELLOR. THE SPD LOSS OF ALL DIRECT ELECTION DISTRICTS IN MUNICH AND ALL BUT ONE IN FRANKFURT IS A DEFEAT FOR THE SPD LEFTISTS, ALTHOUGH MODERATE SPD CANDIDATES WERE TARRED WITH THE SAME BRUSH, AND WILL TEND TO STRENGTHEN SCHMIDT'S MORE CONSERVATIVE LINE IN THE PARTY. MORE SERIOUS FOR SCHMIDT IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH SPD LOSSES REFLECT VOTER UNCERTAINTY AND ANXIETY ABOUT THE FRG'S ECONOMIC SITUATION. PUBLICATION OF AN ECONOMIC REPORT ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS FORECASTING ONE

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MILLION UNEMPLOYED CERTAINLY HURT THE COALITION PARTIES AND IS A REMINDER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF HOW PROFOUND THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE INFLATION/UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION AS IT DEVELOPS COULD BE. ACCORDING TO ONE SPD FRAKTION LEADER, VOTER INSECURITY WAS ALSO FED BY THE GENERAL DIFFUSED AND BICKERING IMAGE PROJECTED BY THE SPD AS WELL AS THE CUMULATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SCANDALS IN FRANKFURT AND MUNICH AND THE DRAWN-

OUT GUILLAUME AFFAIR.

3. THE FDP EMERGES FROM THE ELECTIONS WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH IT ALMOST HELD ITS OWN IN BAVARIA DESPITE THE CHURCH PAPER, IT HAS NOW LOST IMPORTANT AREAS THAT IT HAD WON OVER IN 1970, NOTABLY MIDDLE FRANCONIA AND THE FRANKFURT AREA. CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE SPD IS OBVIOUSLY NOT DOING THE FDP MUCH GOOD. VARIOUS POST-ELECTION ANALYSES POINT OUT THAT MANY

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DISAFFECTED SPD VOTERS WENT DIRECTLY TO THE CDU. AT THE

SAME TIME, THE FDP'S LOSSES WILL TEND TO WEAKEN ITS BARGAINING POWER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND LESSEN ITS ATTRACTIVENESS TO THE CDU/CSU. OUR FDP CONTACTS ARE VERY DISCOURAGED BY THEIR PARTY'S POOR SHOWING. IN ADDITION TO BLAMING THE WEATHER, WHICH HAMPERED THE FDP'S STREET DISCUSSIONS, AND THE VARIOUS LOCAL FACTORS, THEY ALSO FRANKLY ADMIT THAT THE FDP CAMPAIGN WAS POORLY ORGANIZED IN BOTH LAENDER. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SOME CRITICISM OF GENSCHER FOR CONTINUING HIS OFFICIAL TRAVELLING ABROAD AT A TIME WHEN HE COULD HAVE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN ELECTIONEERING. FDP PARTY CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADERS ARE ALREADY TALKING OF THE NEED TO AVOID TOO CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH THEIR SENIOR COALITION PARTNER WHICH THEY BELIEVE HURT THE LIBERAL PARTY IN HESSE AND BAVARIA. WHILE THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE RECENT ELECTION RESULTS WOULD LEAD TO A BREAK-UP OF THE BONN COALITION THE SEEKING OF A MORE INDEPENDENT PUBLIC PROFILE ON THE PART OF THE FDP COULD CREATE FURTHER STRAINS IN THE COALITION.

4. THE CDU/CSU IS UNDERSTANDABLY GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THE BAVARIAN AND HESSE RESULTS AND IS DOING ITS BEST TO CREATE THE PUBLIC IMPRESSION THAT THE OUTCOME REFLECTS THE INCOMPETENCE OF SCHMIDT AND THE WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKEN POLICIES OF THE SPD AND FDP. CDU SECRETARY GENERAL BIEDENKOPF HAS TOLD US THAT CDU/CSU PLANNING WILL NOW PROCEED FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE PARTY HAS A GOOD CHANCE TO WIN A CLEAR MAJORITY IN THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CDU/CSU IS THE LARGEST PARTY IN EIGHT OF THE ELEVEN LAENDER. THE SPD'S LOSS OF HESSE AFTER 28 YEARS AS THE NUMBER ONE PARTY THERE LEAVES IT AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN ONLY THREE (THE THREE SMALLEST) LAENDER -- HAMBURG, BREMEN AND BERLIN. THESE FIGURES, NOT THE CONTINUATION OF THE SPD/FDP COALITION IN HESSE, ARE WHAT IS RELEVANT FOR 1976.

5. BIEDENKOPF TOLD US THAT THE CDU'S PRELIMINARY ANALYSES INDICATE THREE MANIFESTATIONS IN BOTH HESSE AND BAVARIA: A) NEW VOTERS, REFLECTING "A CONSERVATIVE TREND" AMONG THE YOUTH, VOTED PREDOMINANTLY CDU/CSU. OUT OF THE CSU'S NET GAIN OF 330,000 IN BAVARIA, 130,000 WERE NEW VOTERS. B) A CERTAIN SEGMENT OF LABOR VOTERS, FORMERLY HARD-CORE SPD VOTERS, VOTED FOR THE CDU/CSU. THIS REPORTEDLY AMOUNTED TO 120,000 IN BAVARIA. C) A SIZEABLE "LAW AND ORDER VOTE", DISENCHANTED WITH THE ENTRENCHED SPD MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN MUNICH AND FRANKFURT, WENT TO THE CDU/CSU. (THE INFAS INSTITUTE HAS PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS: THE CSU'S NET

GAIN OF 330,000 IN BAVARIA RESULTS FROM AN ABSOLUTE GAIN OF 830,000 AND A LOSS OF 500,000. OF THE 830,000, YOUNG VOTERS ACCOUNTED FOR 220,000; FORMER SUPPORTERS OF THE NPD AND THE BAVARIAN PARTY ACCOUNTED FOR 120,000; AND CONFIDENTIAL

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FORMER SPD SUPPORTERS ACCOUNTED FOR 60,000. IN HESSE, ACCORDING TO INFAS, VOTES WERE SPLIT EVENLY BETWEEN THE SPD AND THE CDU, GIVING EACH ABOUT 100,000 VOTES.)

6. APART FROM THE GENERAL BOOST TO THE CDU/CSU AS A WHOLE, THE RESULTS ARE ALSO A VICTORY FOR STRAUSS AND DREGGER WHO CAN NOW POINT TO THEIR NATIONAL-CONSERVATIVE HARD LINE APPROACH AS THE BEST RECIPE FOR A CDU/CSU VICTORY IN 1976. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT STRAUSS WILL HAVE A GREATER VOICE IN THE PARTY COUNCILS AND IN THE CHOICE OF A CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE. BOTH BIEDENKOPF AND BARZEL HAVE TOLD US ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS, HOWEVER, THAT STRAUSS DOES NOT SEE HIMSELF AS A CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE BECAUSE HE REALIZES THAT HIS CANDIDACY WOULD SPLIT THE PARTY. BIEDENKOPF HAS TOLD US THAT KOHL STILL APPEARS TO BE THE FRONTRUNNER BUT HIS WEAKNESSES ARE BEING ACKNOWLEDGED WITH MORE FREQUENCY. IN ANY CASE, KOHL'S EFFORTS TO SPEED UP THE NOMINATION HAVE FAILED. THE CDU/CSU EXECUTIVE BOARD ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 28 THAT IT WILL NOT SELECT A CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE BEFORE THE END OF MAY -- I.E., AFTER THE NRW ELECTIONS.

7. SPD, FDP AND CDU/CSU CIRCLES ALL AGREE THAT THE KEY ELECTION WILL BE NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA ON MAY 4, 1975. ALTHOUGH THE CDU NOW SEES THE TIME RUNNING IN ITS FAVOR, A GOOD SPD/FDP SHOWING IN POPULOUS NRW COULD MAKE UP FOR THE RECENT SPD/FDP SETBACKS ELSEWHERE.
HILLENBRAND

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